

## HISPANIC/LATINO/A THEOLOGY

- Topic: Contemporary Black/Womanist and Latino/a Theologies in the U.S.:  
A Dialogue—Session II.
- Convener: Orlando O. Espin, University of San Diego
- Presenter: Theresa Torres, Catholic University of America
- Respondent: M. Shawn Copeland, Marquette University

This year the Latino/a Theology and the Black Catholic Theology Program Groups joined efforts and sessions in order to offer participants the possibility for extended discussion and dialogue on issues of mutual interest. The session on Latino/a Theology thus became the second gathering of participants in this extended and very successful dialogue.

Theresa Torres, of Catholic University of America, presented the paper, "Voices from the Margin. Towards a Theology of Reconciliation: Theological Insights from Latino/a and African American Perspectives."

In some ways paralleling issues raised in the first dialogue session by Professors Stephanie Mitchell and Orlando Espin, Torres offered a very good summary of African American and Latino/a theological reflections on reconciliation. Torres faced and named many of the difficulties and misunderstandings which have occasionally plagued the conversation between these two communities in church and society, while she also suggested ways of overcoming the difficulties by paying close attention to the often similar solutions offered by Latino/a and African American theologians.

M. Shawn Copeland responded to Torres' paper by addressing some of the African American and Latino/a theological contributions raised by the presenter, and by furthering many of the issues raised earlier in the day during the first joint Latino/a and Black Theologies session. A large number of participants, most of whom had also attended the morning session, joined in the conversation which followed Torres' and Copeland's presentations. The discussion further developed many of the issues raised earlier, and which were now enriched by Torres and Copeland.

Several very important topics seemed to emerge from the participants' discussion. The category of *mestizaje*, rich and useful as it has been in Latino/a theologies, has within it the possibility of hiding issues of race among and for Latinos/as. *Mestizaje* has often also covered over questions regarding gender and privilege among Latinos/as. Furthermore, *mestizaje* has often raised the Mexican American as the "standard" among Latinos/as, further masking internal Latino/a diversity and promoting a commonality which does not exist without significant nuancing and problematization. The need for a united front among Latino/as hid many critical, internal issues from sustained theological reflection. More specifically (and as a pertinent example), by not addressing issues of race a crucial connecting link to African American theologies has been absent in

Latino/a theologies, and the conversation with African American theologies has not been able to develop in a significant way.

How do Latino/a and Black Catholic theologians cooperate? One repeated suggestion was a transformation in the self-understanding of these theologies, whereby African American and Latino/a theologies could no longer perceive themselves as authentic unless each results from a dialogical context. Hence, Latino/a theologies could not understand themselves as sufficiently Latino/a if they ignored or excluded the Black theological contributions, not as a "politically correct" strategy, but by the conscious incorporation of Black categories of theological analysis into Latino/a theological discourse. The same, in the other direction, would need to occur in African American/Black theologies. Much was discussed in this and in the earlier joint session. Much was accomplished. And significant avenues for collaboration were opened at this year's convention.

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#### MEDIEVAL THEOLOGY

- Topic: Issues in Post-Thomistic Theology  
 Convener: Michael Gorman, The Catholic University of America  
 Moderator: Michael Gorman, The Catholic University of America  
 Presenter: Stephen Brown, Boston College  
 Presenter: Michael Miller, Mount St. Mary's College

Once again, the medieval group's program was set on the basis of an open paper call with blind refereeing. Stephen Brown's paper was titled "The Debate over the Character of Theology in the Early Fourteenth Century." Brown began by noting that when Durandus wrote the prologue to his commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, he spoke of three meanings of the word "theology." The first meaning is the foundational meaning: the revelation that God has given to us in the Scriptures. All other forms of Christian theology rest ultimately on this revelation. The second meaning of theology is theology as science or as a deductive discipline. The third meaning is what he called "declarative and defensive theology." In this last version, the theologian does not deduce new truths but instead focuses on the premises or starting principles themselves.

Aquinas is usually portrayed in the early 14th century as a scientific or deductive theologian, and the best example of "declarative and defensive theology" in this era is the Franciscan Peter Aureoli. Aureoli, however, argues that all the great Christian theologians were in fact also "declarative and defensive" theologians. He even argues that Aquinas practiced this kind of theology. Such a theology had four goals: to define technical terms precisely; to defend the faith